

WILLIAM E. POTTER

William E. Potter's career exemplifies how management and engineering skills learned in the Army Corps of Engineers provide the basis for professional success in both military and civilian life. Indeed, Potter's career is not one, but several. His military career began as a young cadet at West Point, from where he graduated in 1928. After an assignment on the Nicaragua survey team, he furthered his education by earning a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The first assignment in which he had genuine management responsibilities was in the Pittsburgh Engineer District, where he was assigned in 1933. Beginning in the mud and water around Montgomery Dam on the Ohio River, then as a project engineer supervising the construction of Tygart Dam in West Virginia, he learned first-hand how to manage people and material in order to insure the successful completion of a major project.

During World War II, Potter served in a number of responsible administrative posts. He was battalion commander of the 25th Armored Engineer Battalion and Engineer of the Sixth Armored Division. In Europe, he served in a number of important positions in Headquarters, U.S. Army, including Chief of the Plans and Operations Branch, G-4 Section.

After the war, Potter first became Kansas City District Engineer and then the Alaska District Engineer. In 1949, he was assigned to the Office of the Chief of Engineers and for the next two years was in overall charge of the Corps' civil works activities. In July 1952, Potter became Division Engineer of the Missouri River Division. He was in charge of implementing the Corps' military and civil works activities throughout the Missouri basin. One part of his responsibilities involved supervising the construction of several dams on the Missouri as provided for in the Pick-Sloan plan, the basic planning document for water resources development in the Missouri River watershed.

Perhaps the most memorable period of General Potter's career began in June 1956, when he was appointed Governor of the Panama Canal Zone. For four years, Potter oversaw the administration of the Zone as well as the maintenance and operation of the Canal itself. In previous positions, he had developed the ability to work well with both politicians and the general public. This ability was put to the test in the Canal Zone. He was governor

at a time when Panamanians were agitating for increased control of the Canal, and Potter found himself front-page news in both Panama and the United States.

Major General Potter retired from the Army in 1960. At this time he started another career. From 1960 to 1965, he was executive vice-president of the New York World's Fair, working closely with Robert Moses in developing and overseeing fair operations. In 1965, he continued his association with enterprises that both educate and entertain when he joined Walt Disney Productions, eventually becoming senior vice-president of Walt Disney World Company. In that capacity, he was instrumental in establishing Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. In 1973, Potter retired again, although as a private consultant he continued to be actively involved in engineering projects around the world. Potter's multi-faceted career illustrates in microcosm the way in which the skills of the military and civilian engineer overlap.

CAREER SUMMARY

September 1928 - September 1929

Company Officer, First Engineers, Fort DuPont, DE

September 1929 - August 1931

Company Officer, Assistant Supply Officer, and Personnel Officer, Nicaragua

August 1931 - April 1932

Officer in Charge (Hydrological Studies), Nicaragua Canal Survey, Nicaragua

June 1932 - June 1933

Student, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, MA

July 1933 - August 1934

Chief Concrete Technician, Montgomery Dam, United States Engineer Office, Pittsburgh, PA

August 1934 - March 1936

Officer in Charge, Tygart Dam construction, United States Engineer Office, Pittsburgh, PA

March 1936 - July 1936

Officer in Charge, Emsworth Dam construction, United States Engineer Office, Pittsburgh, PA

August 1936 - July 1937

Student Officer, Company Officer's Course, Engineer School, Fort Belvoir, VA

August 1937 - September 1940

Assistant Professor of Military Science and Tactics, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

September 1940 - April 1941

Supply Officer, 16th Engineer Battalion, Armored

April 1941 - June 1941

Executive Officer, 24th Engineer Battalion, Armored

July 1941 - September 1941

Student Officer, G-3 Course, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KA

October 1941 - April 1942

Executive Officer,
23d Engineer Battalion, Armored

April 1942 - March 1943

Commanding Officer, 25th Engineer Battalion, Armored

March 1943 - September 1943
 Commanding Officer, 1138th Engineer Combat Group

November 1943 - December 1943
 Assistant G-3, European Theater of Operations;
 Mobilization, Chief of Troops Section, Headquarters,
 European Theater of Operations

December 1943 - January 1944
 Executive Officer, Psychological Warfare Division,
 European Theater of Operations and 12th Army Group

February 1944 - July 1945
 Assistant G-4, Chief, Planning Branch, Headquarters,
 European Theater of Operations

July 1945 - April 1948
 District Engineer, Kansas City Engineer District, Kansas
 City, MO

April 1948 - April 1949
 District Engineer, Alaska Engineer District, Anchorage, AK

April 1949 - February 1951
 Acting Assistant Chief of Engineers for Civil Works,
 Office, Chief of Engineers, Washington, DC

February 1951 - August 1951
 Assistant Chief of Engineers for Special Projects, Office,
 Chief of Engineers, Washington, DC

August 1951 - June 1952
 Student Officer, National War College, Washington, DC

June 1952 - July 1952
 Deputy Commandant for Education, Industrial College of the
 Armed Forces

July 1952 - May 1956
 Division Engineer, Missouri River Engineer Division,
 Omaha, NE

June 1956 - July 1960
 Governor of the Canal Zone and President, Panama Canal
 Company, Balboa Heights, Canal Zone

30 July 1960
 Retirement from the United States Army

1960 - 1965
 Executive Vice President, New York World's Fair

1965 - 1973

Vice President, Walt Disney Productions, and Senior Vice President, Walt Disney World, Co.

1973 -

Private Consultant, Fowler Potter Associates

PROMOTION HISTORY

Grade	Temporary	Permanent
Second Lieutenant		9 June 1928
First Lieutenant		1 January 1934
Captain		9 June 1938
Major	31 January 1941	9 June 1945
Lieutenant Colonel	1 February 1942	1 July 1948
Colonel	17 May 1943	15 August 1951
Brigadier General	29 April 1952	11 April 1957
Major General	18 May 1956	1 August 1957

PERSONAL DATA

Date and Place of Birth

17 July 1905, Oshkosh, WI

Parents

William Bradford Potter and Arlie Johnson Potter

Marriage

Ruth T. Potter, Grafton, WV, 21 July 1936

Children

Two daughters, Jo Ann and Susan Ruth

Grandchildren

Mark Potter Hipp, Kent Lee Hipp, Stephen Warder Hipp, Edwin Gunner Schull, Susan Elizabeth (Kendall) Schull, and Amanda Arleigh Schull

EDUCATION

Toledo University, Toledo, OH (1923, one year)

United States Military Academy, West Point, NY (BS, 1928)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, MA (BSCE, 1933)

Company Officer's Course, The Engineer School, Fort Belvoir, VA (1937)

Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KA, Fourth Course, G-3 (1941)

National War College, Washington, DC, Regular Course (1952)

Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KA,

Orientation on Tactical Employment of Atomic Weapons (1954)

CITATIONS AND DECORATIONS

Legion of Merit
Bronze Star Medal (Meritorious Service)
Croix de Guerre with Palm (France)
Distinguished Service Medal (1960)

AWARDS

European-African-Middle East Campaign Medal
American Defense Service Medal
American Campaign Medal
World War II Victory Medal
Second Nicaraguan Campaign Medal
National Defense Service Medal
Overseas Bars (3)

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

American Society of Civil Engineers
Society of American Military Engineers
Military Order of World Wars
Rotary

COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, AND DIRECTORSHIPS

Member, Florida Council of 100
Member, Board of Governors, Orlando Regional Medical Center,
1968 - 1982
Member, Board of Greater Orlando Aviation Authority (appointed
by the Governor of Florida), 1980 -
Former Director, Carlisle Corporation; Florida Gas Company;
Trust Company of Florida; Bank of Perrine; Central Florida
Kidney Foundation; and other civic organizations